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SPEECH

OF THE

HON. JAMES L. ORR,

OF SOUTH CAROLINA,

ON THE

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SLAVERY QUESTION.

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, MAY 8, 1850.



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SPEECH

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JAMES L. ORR, OF SOUTH CAROLINA,

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DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, MAY 8, 1850.

The House being in Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union, on the President's Message transmitting the Constitution of California—

Mr. ORR said:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I propose, in the brief hour allotted to me, to examine and present what I conceive to be Northern sentiment upon the subject of slavery, and the inevitable results of that sentiment. I believe, sir, there is much misunderstanding, both at the North and the South, as to the extent and character of that feeling. I know the misapprehension that exists in that part of the country which I have the honor to represent, and I desire to lay before my constituents and the people of the South the result of my observations since I have been a member of this House, so that they may be prepared to judge of the proper means of meeting, counteracting, and repelling that sentiment.

The first evidence of abolition sentiment in the Northern States to which I refer, is to be found in the numerous abolition societies organized in every part of that section of the Union, composed of large numbers of individuals of all classes and sexes. These societies meet at stated periods, for the avowed purpose of advancing their political and moral tenets; they appoint their emissaries, who traverse the country, and who, by their slanders, poison the minds of the masses of their people as to the true character of the institution of slavery. They have established newspapers and periodicals, which are circulated in great profusion, not only in the non-slaveholding States, but are thrown broadcast over the South, through the mails, for the purpose of planting the thorn of discontent in the bosoms of our now happy slaves, and inciting them to the perpetration of the bloody scenes of St. Domingo. These auxiliaries of the American Anti-slavery Society, not content with a general combination against the institutions of

the South, form a component part of the American and *Foreign* Anti-slavery Society, in which they unite with the zealots of foreign countries in an unjust crusade against their brethren of the South. Most of the avowed abolitionists have, however, the merit of frankness at least. They seek to emancipate our slaves, it is true, but concede that it cannot be done consistently with the Constitution; they therefore declare an uncompromising war against the Constitution and the Union; while others, who intend to effect the same end, have not the candor to own it, and hypocritically profess an attachment to the Constitution which they are really seeking to destroy.

Another evidence of the extent of abolition sentiment in the Northern States is, the promotion of certain gentlemen to seats in the other wing of this Capitol. I allude, sir, first to the election of WM. H. SEWARD. It might be that this "faction," as the Abolitionists have been denominated, could, through their societies and conventions, create some attention, and excite the contempt of sensible, moderate men, for their fanaticism; but I would inquire, how comes it to pass that, insignificant as it is said to be, it is enabled to elect from the great State of New York—the Empire State—a man to represent it in the Senate of the United States, whose greatest distinction has been his untiring advocacy of the doctrines of abolition? Does it not show that the major part of the people of that State sympathize deeply with their Senator in his nefarious principles? Look at the recent election, by the Legislature of Ohio—a State in numbers second only to New York—of S. P. CHASE, to represent that State in the Senate of the United States. He has been amongst the most zealous of all his infatuated compeers: even WM. H. SEWARD was not more so, in the advocacy of radical abolition, and the Legislature of Ohio, knowing his sentiments, and representing the people of that State, have honored him with one of the highest official stations on earth. Others, too, have been elected to that body, who owe their promotion to pledges given their constituents, that they would oppose the admission of any more slave States or slave territory into the Union, and favor the application of the Wilmot proviso—that true scion from an abolition stock—to the territories acquired from Mexico. One would suppose that when a Senator avowed that, acting as a Senator, he recognised a higher obligation than his oath to support the Constitution of the United States—an obligation which requires him to violate and set aside the provisions of that sacred instrument—the Legislature of his State, then in session, would have promptly branded such a declaration with the infamy it deserves. Such a declaration, it is known to the country, was recently made in the Senate by the Senator from New York to whom I have alluded—but the Legislature of that State adopted no resolutions condemnatory of this sentiment.

They did, however, pass resolutions, with great unanimity, sustaining fully the ultra positions of their distinguished—no, their notorious Senator. Resolutions have been adopted in every non-slaveholding State, instructing their Senators and requesting their Representatives in Congress to vote in favor of the adoption of the Wilmot proviso, and in opposition, in many cases, to the admission of any other slave States.

Mr. McLANAHAN asked if the gentleman from South Carolina had observed that the Legislature of Pennsylvania had recently laid upon the table resolutions in favor of the Wilmot proviso?

Mr. ORR. I have; and I honor the patriotism of your constituents in coming to the rescue of the Constitution in these perilous times. Instructions, such as I have spoken of, did pass the Legislature of Pennsylvania two years ago. I repeat the assertion, that every non-slaveholding State has passed resolutions of an unmistakable abolition character. Yet the unceasing efforts of the press here, and of newspaper correspondents, are directed to induce the people of the South to believe that this hostility to our institutions is confined to a few fanatics, and that abolition is not the general sentiment of the country.

Another evidence of the progress of abolition sentiment is the legislation of the non-slaveholding States obstructing the delivering up of fugitive slaves. What is the constitutional provision upon that subject? "No person held to service or labor in one State, under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labor, but shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due." Some of the Northern States have passed laws imposing heavy penalties on any State officer who may aid the owner in recovering his runaway slave. The State officers of all the States swear to support the Constitution of the United States as well as the Constitution of the State in which the officer resides. Now, if the Constitution of the United States requires that a person held to service shall be delivered up, and a State officer refuses to obey that provision, does he prove faithful to his oath? And is not the penalty imposed by the particular State a compulsion upon the officer to commit perjury? This legislation reflects truly the feeling of the Northern States upon this subject. When a slave escapes, friends receive him with open arms, and clandestinely convey him beyond the reach of his lawful owner. If the slave, perchance, is overtaken, or hunted out of his secret hiding place, the owner perils his life, through the lawless violence of the mob, in reclaiming his property and in asserting rights solemnly guaranteed to him by the Constitution. The laws and popular tumults against the master, to which I have adverted, clearly indicates the settled, deliberate purpose of the Northern States to deprive us of our rights in that species of property.

Northern sentiment on the subject of abolition speaks trumpet-tongued in the political privileges conferred on free negroes in some of the Northern States. Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New York, all extend the right of suffrage to the African. At the last State election in New York the free negroes held the balance of power between the two political parties. Representatives upon this floor receive the votes of this degraded class, and the success of republican institutions is made to depend upon the *judgment and intelligence of the free negro sovereigns*. The aim of the abolitionists looks first to the emancipation of our slaves throughout the South, and then is to follow their elevation to all the social and political privileges of the white man. The thick-lipped African is to march up to the same ballot-box, eat at the same table, and sit in the same parlor with the white man. This, the Abolitionists would say, "is a consummation devoutly to be wished for."

Another evidence, sir, of the progress and intolerance of this sentiment is to be found in the separation of two of the most numerous and respectable Christian denominations in this country, (the Baptist and the Methodist.) They assembled in convention and conference, year after year, to advance that holy cause in which they had mutually embarked. But, sir, the demon of fanatical discord stalked into their associations; Christian charity and brotherly love were impotent in resisting its encroachment upon their peace and union; Northern members demanded that their Southern brethren should surrender and eschew the institutions of the country in which they lived—that they should become traitors to the State to which their allegiance was due, and prove recreant to their obligations to the community in which they resided. They were too holy to commune at the same altar with their Southern brethren, until the latter should pronounce slavery a sin, and agree to enlist in an effort for its extinction. The terms were too ignominious for Christians or patriots. With a manly independence, the Southern wing of both denominations rejected the offer, and the separation of their churches ensued. These two, sir, were heavy blows against our political union, from the shocks of which we have not yet recovered.

Another evidence of the extent of this sentiment is exhibited in the popularity, the universal popularity, of the doctrine of free soil—the legitimate scion, as I before remarked, of the abolition stock. The popularity of that doctrine is not to be judged by the independent free-soil party organization. Those who candidly avow the opinion are few in number; they refuse to co-operate with either of the other parties, and hence a separate organization; but the mass of the Northern people comprising the two great political parties sympathize in sentiment and feeling with the free-soilers. It is idle to disguise the fact. The speeches delivered by Northern Representatives since the commencement of

this discussion is a thorough vindication of the truth of this assertion. They may be well arranged in two classes, one of which broadly asserts that the North has been guilty of no aggression upon the South—that the South has no just cause of complaint against them—that our demand to share equally in the common property of all the States is an aggression upon the North—that our fugitive slaves are always promptly surrendered upon the demand of the owner. This is the language addressed by them to Northern constituencies; they do not appeal to them to quiet this infamous agitation—they do not remind them of their constitutional obligations; and thus their course can have no other effect than to fan the flames of fanaticism until they shall burn out the vitals of the Constitution and Union.

The other class show equally, in their speeches, their attachment to the doctrines of free soil. Every Northern man of this class who has addressed the committee on this subject, except my friend from Indiana, [Mr. GORMAN,] and my friend from Pennsylvania, [Mr. ROSS,] is in the same category. Their speeches open, generally, with a violent philippic against the South. They charge us with arrogance, and some of them are in hot haste in volunteering their services to march troops into our midst to force us to continue in the Union if we should choose to secede from it. They tell us that they are in favor of non-intervention. What does this non-intervention amount to? If it were a *bona fide* non-interference with our rights, it would be all that the South could ask—all that she has a right to demand under the Constitution. But this much she does demand; and, depend upon it, she will be appeased by nothing less. Some of the Northern non-interventionists deny that Congress has the power to pass the Wilmot proviso; others maintain the position that Congress has the power, but should not exercise it, and straightway offer the excuse to their constituents that it is not necessary to pass it—that the Mexican laws are in force, and they exclude slavery. This is the opinion entertained by General CASS and all the non-intervention northern Democrats in this House. Is not this a heavy tribute which non-intervention pays to free-soil? It is tantamount to saying, we are in favor of the end which the proviso aims to accomplish, viz: the exclusion of the slave States from all the territory acquired from Mexico—we oppose its adoption only because we regard it as unnecessary, and because we believe the course we propose to pursue will most effectually subserve the end without giving offence and producing irritation in the South. I repeat it, sir, such non-intervention pays a heavy tribute to abolitionism.

Another, and perhaps, Mr. Chairman, the most pregnant indication of the progress of abolition sentiment, is the remarkable condition of things that now exists throughout the country in relation to the admission of California into the Union. I venture to say that never in the history of this Government has any important

question been presented for the consideration of Congress where party lines were all broken down as they have been on this question. It is an Administration measure—one which certainly reflects but little credit upon its wisdom or patriotism. Parties have but recently emerged from the heat of a presidential struggle, and upon all other questions, save this alone, which have been introduced into this House at the present session, partisan gladiators have waged as fierce a contest as in days of yore. Irregular and objectionable as all the California proceedings have been, but one solitary Representative (I refer again to my friend Mr. Ross) from the free States has avowed himself opposed to its admission into the Union; parties are broken down—the North is making it a sectional question. Northern Whigs and Northern Democrats, Whig Free-Soilers and Democratic Free-Soilers all rally upon this common platform, and the emulation between them is great who shall be foremost in introducing this embryo State into the Union. Some of the objections to its admission into the Union I will briefly notice. No census had been taken either by the authority of the pretended State or by the authority of Congress. We have no official information which would authorize us to determine whether the population was ten thousand or one hundred thousand. The number of votes said to have been polled in the ratification of the constitution was about thirteen thousand. This number of voters, where the population is an average one, would indicate a population of seventy thousand souls. The proportion of the adult male population in California is greater by far than in the States, comparatively few women or children having emigrated thither. If the number of votes polled be adopted as the criterion by which the population is to be adjudged, it could not have exceeded, at the date of the ratification of the constitution, forty thousand; and, with these facts, Congress is importuned to admit California with two Representatives, with a less population of American citizens than each member on this floor represents.

Then as to its boundaries, they contain sufficient territory to make five large States, and embrace a sea-coast of more than eight hundred miles.

The convention which framed the constitution was not called by authority of Congress, but by a military officer, who, by virtue of the commission he held under the Government of the United States, exercised the functions of civil governor. His ukase directed that the convention should consist of thirty-seven members. After the convention was elected, it assembled, and, by a vote for which it had no authority, not even from the military dictator, it increased the number of delegates from thirty-seven to seventy-nine, and allowed the additional number, without referring it to the people, to take their seats, they being the defeated candidates at the election. In my judgment it was the duty of the President to have censured the officer who thus exercised the

high prerogative of military dictator. If the President had desired to carry out the will of Congress according to his pledges, that officer could not have escaped punishment, for Congress at its last session positively refused to allow the people of California to do that which the military governor, by a military order or proclamation, bearing striking analogies to an order, instructed them to do.

Who are the people of California? A world in miniature—the four quarters of the globe are represented there. No naturalization laws having been passed, there was no legal impediment to their exercising the right of suffrage. The whole proceeding—not having the consent of Congress, the rightful legislature of the territory—was illegal and revolutionary. I repeat, Mr. Chairman, that with all these irregularities we find every party in Congress from the Northern States in favor of the admission of California into the Union—and why? For no other reason than that slavery has been excluded by her constitution. If her people had assembled under lawful authority, with an ascertained population equal to the present ratio of representation, they alone would have had the power to determine the question whether slavery should or should not exist within her limits. If that decision had been to exclude slavery, no murmur of complaint would have been heard from any Southern man; but I undertake to say here, if slavery had been tolerated, we should have found just as unanimous a sentiment in the Northern States against her admission into the Union as we now find in favor of that proposition; and I do not make this assertion without good foundation. When Florida applied for admission into the Union, a large minority in Congress voted against it, when every initiatory step had been regular, on the isolated ground that she was a slaveholding State.

I have other evidences, Mr. Chairman, of Northern sentiment upon the subject of slavery. The speech recently delivered by the distinguished Senator from Massachusetts, (Mr. WEBSTER,) and the action of the House in laying upon the table the resolution of the gentleman from Ohio, in the early part of the session, has induced the belief in the South that a sense of justice had returned to their Northern brethren. These appearances are deceptive. It is an illusion which I deeply deplore. The Senator from Massachusetts made a truly patriotic speech; but what did he propose? All that he offered was, to give to the South her clearly-defined constitutional rights. This gratified us. It gratified us to know that a distinguished Northern man would frankly and ingenuously concede our rights, and enforce their execution by his vote and voice. How has that speech been received in the State of Massachusetts, of which he is the proudest ornament? Her legislature was in session; and fearing lest that speech might contain the balm to heal the divisions of the country, straightway new poison was poured into the wound. Resolutions were passed, taking the strongest and most offensive ground. They did not in-

struct him, it is true, for the dominant party do not assume the right to instruct; but that Senator has not been sustained by his immediate constituents. A few have endorsed his sentiments, but a large majority of the people and of the press of Massachusetts have condemned him. He has not been more fortunate here—one after another of the Massachusetts delegation has addressed the committee, all assuming positions adverse to those taken by Mr. WEBSTER. The only hope of aid in this House took its departure to-day, when the honorable gentleman who preceded me (Mr. WINTHROP) announced himself in favor of General Taylor's unstatesmanlike plan of settling the existing difficulties. DANIEL WEBSTER once spoke and could speak for New England. The waves of fanaticism have broken over the land of the Pilgrim Fathers, and are sweeping off the influence and power of her best and brightest men. When his genius has proved itself impotent to stay this onward wave in the minds of those whose service he has so much honored, upon what ground can the South rest her hopes of peace and safety in this Government?

The action of the House in laying Roor's resolution upon the table promised fruits which will never be gathered. If the proviso is not pressed at the present session, it will not be because the North have abated one tittle in their devotion to it. The advocates of that measure are satisfied they will accomplish their purpose quite as effectually, and much more adroitly, in another way.

But, sir, there is still further evidence of Northern sentiment. We have been told by one gentleman, in this debate, "that the only way in which the abolition of slavery in the States can be constitutionally effected, is to confine it within its present limits;" another said, "that no more slave States or slave Territory should come into this Union—sooner civil war," &c.; another, "the Wilmot proviso was an abiding principle in the hearts of the people of the free States;" and still another, who is a moderate Northern man, "that slavery was a national shame and a national disgrace." I quote these sentiments that they may be contrasted with the oft-reiterated assertion, that it is not the purpose of the Northern States to abolish slavery where it now exists. They tell us plainly they can effect abolition in the States, through the legislation of this Government, without violating the Constitution; and they admit, further, that they will do it by indirect means, but their constitutional scruples forbid direct legislation in abolishing slavery.

Now, sir, I have a great contempt for the morality or honesty of that sort of reasoning which would make an act unconstitutional if executed directly, but satisfies the conscience that it is constitutional if done indirectly.

The institution of slavery being a "national shame and a national disgrace" in the opinion of the North, and having the

power to abolish it by indirect means, the legislation of this Government (for the North have the majority) is to be hostile to our institutions. We then present this anomaly, that a Government established by wise and patriotic men for the security and safety of the persons and property of all its parts—a Government which derives its sustenance by taxation upon all its parts, is to depart so far from the purposes of its creation as to destroy, by its hostile legislation, the property of one-half of the States composing that Government; and that, too, when the States thus threatened are in such a hopeless minority in Congress that they are unable to protect themselves against that hostile, unconstitutional legislation. The value of our slave property is some sixteen hundred millions of dollars: this is to be destroyed through a majority.

The rule for construing the Constitution, which is fast being established, is, that the majority have the right to rule, and whatever construction they give is the true construction. Such, Mr. Chairman, is not our reading or construction of that instrument. The Constitution is to protect the rights of minorities; majorities have always the ability to protect themselves. If they have the absolute right of making and construing, then there is no necessity for a written Constitution. If the will of the majority is absolute, it is the strong against the weak—the law of force which existed between individuals before Governments was instituted. If the power now claimed for the Northern States is persevered in, it requires no spirit of prophecy to foresee that it must end in disunion. The institution of slavery is so intimately interwoven with society, and is so indispensable to our social, political, and national prosperity, that it will not be surrendered so long as there is a Southern hand to strike in its defence. We intend to preserve and perpetuate it. We have another demand, and that is, that we shall be allowed to enjoy our property in peace, quiet, and security. I tell Northern gentlemen to-day, that five years will not elapse before they will be required to make their choice between non-intervention and non-agitation through Congress on the one hand, and a dissolution of this Government on the other; and I tell Southern people, if this agitation is continued during that time, their peace and personal security will require them to choose between secession and negro emancipation. Sir, I do not desire to be considered an alarmist; but if gentlemen will recur to the history of the country, they will learn that the anti-slavery party was contemptible and insignificant, but it has now grown to be a great colossal power, overshadowing almost the entire North, and has enlisted under its banner all the political parties there. If its progress is as rapid in the next five years as for the last ten, you will find no Northern Representative who will so far outrage the sentiment of his constituents as to oppose even the abolition of slavery in the States.

I will here digress, Mr. Chairman, to reply to a complaint which has been urged by several Northern gentlemen, charging that the South has for a series of years occupied the Federal offices. On reference to the past, it will be found to be true that the South has held a larger share of the prominent offices of the Government than those of the North. I am able to give a satisfactory reason for this fact, and to show whence it arises. When a Southern man enters into public life, he is brought in by the party to which he is attached, and he is continued in office, if he be a faithful representative, so long as his party continues in the ascendancy, or until he chooses voluntarily to retire. In the North a different rule prevails—rotation in office is the recognised system with all parties. The rule may be a correct one in offices of profit merely, but when applied to representatives, either State or Federal, the constituent can never be so well represented. Southern men remain longer in Congress; they have therefore better opportunities for the development of their genius and talent, and their experience gives them the advantage over abler men who are without experience; their services become more conspicuous; and when individuals are selected for prominent stations in the Government, they are placed there because they have more national reputation. But Northern gentlemen, whilst they have observed this fact, with some manifestations of jealousy, forget that nearly three-fourths of the public expenditures of this Government fall into the Northern lap. The gentleman from Illinois [Mr. HARRIS] denied, for the first time, as I believe, this statement, and went into a minute examination for the purpose of showing that the South had received more than her proportionate share of those expenditures. He obtained the services of an experienced clerk in making the calculation, and he reports that in a period of ten years, out of nineteen millions for local appropriations, nine millions have been given to the South, while only ten millions have gone to the North. The clerk has committed a palpable blunder, and I wonder that he has not been guillotined ere this for incompetency or infidelity. Only nineteen millions of dollars expended on local objects during a period of ten years! The gentleman from Illinois hurries to the census of 1840, to learn there that this appropriation gives to every white person in the North \$1 02, and at the South \$1 90. I propose to advert to a few items only, which I suppose the clerk did not embrace in his calculations. They will show which section of the Union has foraged most liberally from the public treasury. The expenditure for pensions up to 1838 amounted in the Northern States to \$28,000,000;* in the Southern States to \$7,000,000. New York contributed to the support of the revolutionary war \$7,179,983, and had received in 1838, in pensions, \$7,850,054.

* I am indebted to the author of a pamphlet entitled "The Union, past and future—how it works, and how to save it," for many of these statistics.

The public lands donated by Congress to the Northern States have been worth \$7,584,899; the same in the South \$4,025,000. Since the establishment of the Government, the cost of collecting the customs has been \$53,000,000; \$43,000,000 expended in the North, and \$10,000,000 in the South. Bounties on pickled fish, &c., in the North, exclusively, \$10,000,000. The forts on the Northern coast have cost, on each mile, \$838; on the Southern coast \$535 per mile. In 1846 there was one light-house to every fifty miles of Northern coast; whilst in the South there was one for every two hundred and seventy-six miles. The expenditures for internal improvements from 1824 to 1833, in the North, was \$5,194,441; in the South \$957,000. From 1834 to 1845, for the same purpose, in the North, \$7,231,639; and in the South \$1,171,500.

This much, sir, with reference to what the gentleman said about appropriations. I propose now to examine so much of the same gentleman's speech as to the relative number of troops furnished by the North and the South in the late war with Mexico. I adopt his figures, and assume them to be correct. The South furnished 47,649 volunteers; the North 24,712. The gentleman says that this is not the fair way of making the calculation—that the amount of service rendered in months is “the fairest way of making the calculation.” His figures show that the South furnished service in months 365,500 months; the North 309,400. This still gives the South a preponderance. Not contented, however, with this result, he sets out upon a third series of figures, that he may give the North the superiority. This calculation includes all the enlistments made during the war, as also for the ten new regiments; and assumes that two-thirds of these enlistments were from the North; and when his calculation is footed up, the North furnished service equal to 813,648 months, and the South equal to 627,625 months. Well, I go back to the census of 1840, and he, at least, can make no objection to the authority, having appealed to this source in the first branch of his argument. I therefore take his figures, and reply with his authority. If the South furnished 47,649 volunteers, according to population the North should have furnished 98,148. They furnished 24,712—deficit of their just proportion 73,436.

The South furnished service of volunteers in months equal to 365,500 months. The North should have furnished service in months equal to 754,020 months; they furnished 309,400—deficit of their just proportion 444,620. But if the enlistments are superadded to the above, it will be seen that the North furnished in months equal to 813,648; the South 627,625. The North should have furnished service in months 1,294,780 months—deficit of her just proportion 481,132.

I enter into these calculations for the purpose of vindicating the truth of the Southern Address—for the purpose of vindicating the truth of the allegations which have been made by Southern

members on this floor, that the South contributed more than her just proportion of troops in making the acquisitions from Mexico which the North mean to exclude us from, either through the Wilmot proviso or the "*non-intervention*" policy, in connection with the pretence that the Mexican laws are in force. He went a little further, and introduced an estimate of the service by the North and the South in the Revolutionary war. He says, for the continental line of the Revolution, the North furnished 172,436 men, and the South 59,335.

It is known, Mr. Chairman, to every one who is familiar with the history of the Revolution, that a very large proportion of the troops that were engaged in that protracted and perilous contest were not connected with the continental army. If the gentleman had made an accurate examination of the number of troops furnished by each of the States, he would have found that Virginia alone furnished 56,721. Pennsylvania, with a population equal to Virginia, furnished 34,965; New York 29,836; South Carolina 31,131. South Carolina sent thirty-seven out of every forty-two of her citizens capable of bearing arms, Massachusetts thirty-two, Connecticut thirty, New Hampshire eighteen.

I will answer with statistical facts the delusion existing in the minds of some who believe that the pecuniary and social condition is more elevated in the North than in the South. We have heard that Virginia was sinking—was falling fast into decay; that her sisters have advanced in prosperity and wealth whilst she has been retrograding—all of which is attributed to her system of domestic servitude. Why, sir, this is but an assumption—a most unwarrantable assumption—because it has no foundation in fact. The abolitionists make their proselytes believe that Virginia is in a most dilapidated state—that her forests have all been destroyed—the face of her fields furrowed with deep gullies—and that her low grounds have been exhausted by unskilful husbandry. Virginia has more wealth according to population than any one of the Northern States. The average wealth of each inhabitant, free and slave, is \$471; or free alone, \$741. In Kentucky the average wealth of each inhabitant, free and slave, is \$319; whilst that of Ohio is but \$227; Pennsylvania \$219; New York \$228. And, sir, the productions of the slaveholding States will compare favorably with the non-slaveholding. The advantage will be found to be largely on the side of the former in the value of those productions. The South produces more Indian corn, and the North more wheat; but the South has a complete monopoly, by soil and climate, in the production of cotton, sugar, rice, and tobacco.

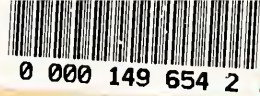
The value of these four crops the last year exceeds \$125,000,000. But compare the productions of individual States. Michigan and Arkansas were admitted into the Union about the same time; Michigan is one of the most flourishing of the northwestern

States, washed on three sides by navigable waters, and enjoying an extensive system of internal improvements; and her crops last year yielded to each inhabitant \$31 50. The crop of Arkansas yielded to each white inhabitant \$101; and if the slaves are counted as persons, the value of the crop was \$81 50 for each inhabitant; so that the production of Arkansas, with a fertile soil, though not a genial climate, nearly trebles that of Michigan.

Mr. Chairman, I am admonished that my hour is drawing rapidly to its close; I therefore return to the subject from which I digressed longer than I intended. Whether slavery be a sin or not, is a question with which this Government has nothing to do. It is recognised by the Constitution, and protected to the fullest extent. He who believes it sinful, therefore, and feels a moral duty devolving upon him to extirpate it, should candidly avow himself a disunionist, and seek to dissolve this supposed sinful alliance. If, on the contrary, he is ready to abide by the Constitution, in letter and spirit, then his warfare against slavery is ended—he must ground his arms, and cease to agitate. It is a matter of indifference to us whether you consider slavery right or wrong; we alone must be the judges of its blessings and its curses. We do not complain of your abstract opinions upon that subject; but it becomes a question of the profoundest interest to us, when you make your abstract opinions on the morality of the institution the basis of your political action.

The abolition feeling in the North is founded in religious fanaticism—its votaries, like fanatics in every age of the world, are guided neither by religion, morality, nor justice. The Scripture argument in favor of slavery is unanswerable; but still argument never reaches the understanding or conscience of the fanatic. The history of the Crusades, which involved Europe in blood and carnage, well illustrates its folly and madness, when kings and nations vied with each other in their *benevolent* and *Christian* purpose of expelling the Infidels from the city of Jerusalem. When the phrensy of madness sears the brain, reason, the great helm of human action, fails to control its motions; and here is the great danger of abolition. The masses may be sincere; but when they attempt to enforce, as they are now doing, a supposed moral obligation through political channels, without regard to the rights of others, or the supreme law of the land, cool-headed and discreet men must rise up in the majesty of their strength and crush it, or consent to give up our institutions, and be crushed by it. Fanaticism is not often sated until it has gorged itself with blood or ruin.

The dangers to the Republic every patriot desires may be averted, and the union of these States preserved in its pristine purity. It is endeared to us by a thousand ties hallowed by the memories of the past, and excites in the mind emotions little short of veneration. I desire it to be preserved, but it must be preserved



in its purity, if it is worth preserving at all. That man is the disunionist who will trample down the Constitution and destroy the rights of the States. I have spoken plainly, sir, of the perils to which we are exposed. I know that my section of the Union is deceived and deluded as to the true situation of this controversy. They have cherished with abiding confidence the hope that their Northern brethren would cease their aggressions and do them justice. The events which have transpired here, and to which I have adverted, (WEBSTER'S speech, and the laying of Roor's resolution on the table,) have added to the delusion. I warn them to rise from the lethargy into which they have been betrayed. I tell them now, in all candor, that I see no returning sense of justice in the North. They should appoint their delegates to the Nashville Convention: let them assemble there, and deliberate upon the grave issues which abolition has presented—let them concentrate the sentiment of the South, and lay such plans as will defeat the ends of abolitionists. Every Southern State should be fully represented there by her ablest Constitution-loving sons. That convention, sir, will meet, although it is probable that the confident expectation of a compromise will prevent its being as numerously attended as it would have been some months back, the people believing that the necessity of its convening has passed away. I fear, sir, they have been deluded into the hope of compromise, so industriously instilled into their minds for the purpose of defeating the Nashville Convention. That effort has been partially successful; but the convention will nevertheless assemble, and the South will not readily forget those by whom they have been deceived. Sir, it has been fashionable to denounce that convention, and to disparage the purposes of those who called it. For one, I am not ashamed of that convention—nothing could make me ashamed of it, but the failure of the South, or of those with whom my honor is more immediately bound up, to attend it. The ends of that convention were high and holy; it was called to protect the Constitution, to save the Union, by taking such steps as might prevent, if possible, the consummation of measures which would probably lead to the destruction of both. Had the purpose been disunion, those who called that convention would have waited until the irretrievable step had been taken, and nothing left to the South but submission or secession. The present is a critical conjuncture of political affairs; there is a propriety, nay, almost a necessity, for Southern men to commune with each other. I, for one, wish that harmony may mark their deliberations, and that the result of those deliberations may be worthy of the occasion and of the cause for which they will convene.

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